



The Prefecture of Rhodope

In the heart of Thrace, the Prefecture of Rhodope signals a natural, but also structured, environment combining a succession of ecosystems, landscapes and cultures in a unique way.

To the north, part of the east extremities of the Rhodope mountain range delineates the border of the Prefecture with Bulgaria. In the central and south part, the far-reaching plain with the fertile fields and meadows is run through by life-offering rivers and marks the agricultural landscape. To the south, the coastal zone and a wetland complex comprising lakes, lagoons and river deltas, create an ecosystem with internationally recognized values and landscapes of great beauty and variety.

The natural resources of the Prefecture of Rhodope should be prudently used, to ensure the area's sustainable development. The low population density index is evidence of the acute problem of rural abandonment, in particular of mountainous and disadvantageous areas. The area is virgin regarding infrastructures and works of conservation, promotion and wise use of its natural wealth.



 **Protection and Rehabilitation**
of Water and Forest Resources of the Prefecture of Rhodope

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Implementing Agency

Decentralized Administration of Macedonia-Thrace

Water Directorate of East Macedonia-Thrace

Forest Directorate of the Prefecture of Rhodope

Directorate of Agricultural Affairs of East Macedonia-Thrace

Directorate of Environment and Spatial Planning of East Macedonia-Thrace

Cooperating agencies

Goulandris Natural History Museum, Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre

Region of East Macedonia-Thrace, Directorate of Technical Works

Regional Development Fund of East Macedonia-Thrace

Delta of Nestos-Vistonida-Ismarida Management Body



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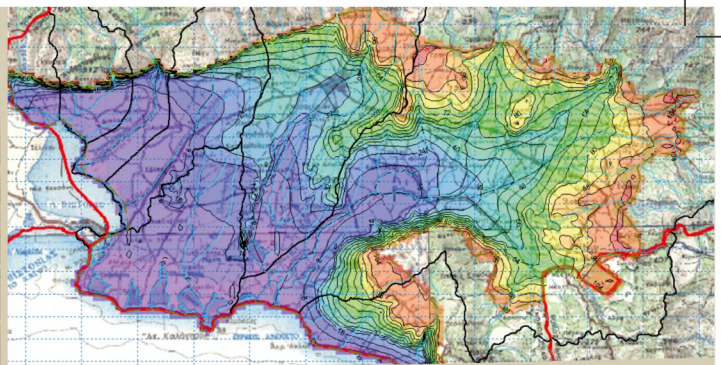
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Protection and Rehabilitation
of Water and Forest Resources of the Prefecture of Rhodope





The project

The project “Protection and rehabilitation of water and forest resources of the Prefecture of Rhodope” aims at the conservation and restoration, as well as at the wise use of the prefecture’s natural resources.

Organized on the basis of an integrated planning, through properly selected actions, it contributes to the sustainable development of the region as it:

- a) supports the functions and multiple values of natural resources,
- b) safeguards the productive activities of residents, and
- c) improves the quality of life in the area.



Actions

01. Development of spatial data infrastructure at Region level

It aims at the provision of timely and accurate information for water users and institutions related to the management and protection of forests and water resources. It concerns the organisation and dissemination of spatial and non-spatial information and includes the development of two Web applications of Geographical Information Systems (Web GIS) and a Spatial Data Infrastructure. Manuals and training seminars shall be prepared and organized for the personnel of the pertinent authorities.

02. Installation of meteorological and hydrometric station network

It aims at monitoring the spatial and temporal distribution of meteorological and hydrological parameters and includes the installation of a monitoring network. The network comprises 8 meteorological stations, 7 water gauges and 6 piezometers, all with wireless transmission of data on the Web GIS of the Water Directorate. The network will enable the forecast of flood and of spatial and temporal distribution of climate and hydrological parameters, determining water needs of crops etc.

03. Protection and restoration of the ecosystem of Ismarida Lake

The action includes:

- > Analysis of the pressures exerted on Ismarida Lake by the current management of the agro-ecosystems, as the result of fertilizers, irrigation and changes of land use. Satellite image analysis is applied, in order to identify crop composition, as well as integrated simulation techniques of the surface and ground waters at Prefecture level.
- > Assessment of the functions and values of Ismarida Lake: analysis of the hydro period of the lake, assessment of the ecological quality of its waters, investigation of the status and trends of bird and the fish populations of the lake, assessment of the functions of the ecosystem, preparation of a study for the management of the reeds.
- > An independent environmental impact assessment resulting from the plan for the management of the lake’s reeds will direct the restoration works (e.g. opening of canals, creation of open areas in the thick reeds).

04. Installation and rehabilitation of protective forests in the Prefecture of Rhodope

It aims at the rehabilitation of degraded forests of Rhodope mountain and the protection of eroded soils, the decrease of sediment discharge downstream of torrents ending in Komsatos River, which sets alluvial deposits in Vistonida Lake, and the mitigation of flooding peaks at local level.

The action concerns the planting of an area of more than 150 ha in two areas of Rhodope mountain, in Krystalli and Poa. In suitable areas, and particularly in degraded, bushy fallows and in bare areas that have not been strongly eroded, Black pine (*Pinus nigra*) and other forest species, suitable for the stabilization of the soil, shall be planted and the natural regeneration of the Hungarian oak (*Quercus frainetta*) will be supported. Planted areas will be fenced to be protected from grazing.

05. Management and publicity activities

It includes the general project management, as well as promotion of the natural wealth of the Prefecture of Rhodope, awareness-raising activities, consultations with stakeholders, and dissemination and promotion of the project results.

